

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-09 INR-10 L-03 NEA-10

NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 GAC-01 USIA-12 TRSE-00

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INFO USMISSION NATO

COMICEDEFOR

CINCLANT

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S E C R E T REYKJAVIK 0402

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR IC

SUBJECT: ICELAND DEFENSE FORCE RETENTION ISSUE

1. I AM CONCERNED THAT SOME NATO SPOKESMEN IN BRUSSELS MAY UNWITTINGLY BE CREATING DIFFICULTIES FOR US IN THE IDF RETENTION ISSUE. A FEW MONTHS AGO I MENTIONED TO WASHINGTON THAT THE REACTION IN MFA TO THE NATO STUDY TRANSMITTED TO GOI DC. 3, 1971 (US NATO TEL 12 OF JAN. 3, 1973) WAS THAT THE ANSWER TO GOI' S QUESTION NUMBER FOUR UNDERCUT ONE OF THE BASIC ISSUES, NAMELY WHETHER STATIONING MILITARY PERSONNEL IN ICELAND IS NECESSARY TO OPERATE THE WARNING AND SURVEILLANCE FUNCTIONS. THE ANSWER WAS UNFORTUNATE IN THAT IT FAILED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE MINIMAL SIZE OF THE IDF, THE FINELY- STRUCTURED DEFENSE FORCE, AND THE SECURITY REQUIREMENTS TO PROHIBIT COMPROMISE OR PHYSICAL SIZURE OF THE SURVEILLANCE EQUIPMENT IN THE ABSENCE OF AN OFFICIAL SECRETS LAW IN ICELAND. AT THE TIME MFA OFFICERS, INCLUDING THE FONMIN, GAVE US THEIR REACTION THEY REMARKED THAT IF IDF WAS IN FACT A NATO BASE OR A BASE ADMINISTERED ON BEHALF OF NATO, THEN SURELY NATO
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OFFICIALS SHOULD BE ABLE TO ANSWER THE QUESTION WITHOUT PASSING THE BUCK TO USG.

2. THERE HAS NOW COME TO OUR ATTENTION ANOTHER UNFORTUNATE STATEMENT ALLEGEDLY BY A NATO SPOKESMAN. TWO OF THE THE THREE ICELANDIC

STUDENT DELEGATES TO THE FEB. 22-23 ECCS CONFERENCE IN BRUSSELS EXPRESSED TO EMBOFF LAST WEEK THEIR DISAPPOINTMENT WITH PRESENTATION BY NATO OF ICELAND'S POSITION IN THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE. JON SOLNESS AND BENEDIKT OLAFSSON REPORTED THAT WHEN THEY ASKED NATO BRIEFER FOR OFFICIAL NATO VIEW OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF ICELAND TO DEFENSE OF ATLANTIC COMMUNITY, NATO SPOKESMAN SIDESTEPED ISSUE SAYING THAT HE UNDERSTOOD MILITARY BASE IN ICELAND WAS US AND THEREFORE HE WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO ANSWER THE QUESTION. STUDENTS SAID THEY POINTED OUT THAT KEFLAVIK STATION WAS ALWAYS REFERRED TO BY ICELANDIC AND U. S. OFFICIALS AS QUOTE THE NATO BASE UNQUOTE AND NOTED THAT BILLBOARD AT BASE ENTRANCE WELCOMED VISITORS TO THE QUOTE NATO BASE UNQUOTE. NATO SPOKESMAN, NEVERTHELESS, INSISTED THAT BASE WAS AN AMERICAN FACILITY AND THAT HE WAS UNQUALIFIED TO MAKE ANY STATEMENT REGARDING THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF ICELAND OR THE BASE.

3. THESE STUDENT DELEGATES WENT TO CONFERENCE CONFIRMED SUPPORTERS OF NATO AND THE BASE AND RETURNED CONFUSED AND BEWILDERED AS TO WHETHER IDF HAS LOST ITS SIGNIFICANCE TO NATO. THE NATO BRIEFER'S RELUCTANCE TO ASSOCIATE NATO OPINION AND IDENTIFICATION WITH IDF, ESPECIALLY IN CONTEXT OF CURRENT ATTACKS ON IDF AND DEMANDS FOR ITS WITHDRAWAL WAS A GRAVE ERROR. MANY YOUNG PEOPLE IN ICELAND TODAY ARE UNWILLING TO BELIEVE IDF IS STILL NEEDED FOR DEFENSE OF ICELAND. THEY ALSO QUESTION NATO'S RELEVANCE. WHEN WE ARE ABLE TO IDENTIFY A GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE WILLING TO SUPPORT IDF AND NATO, WE TRY TO ENCOURAGE THEIR INTEREST. THIS LATEST INCIDENT BY NATO, IF ACCURATE, WAS DEFINITELY NOT HELPFUL.
IRVING

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